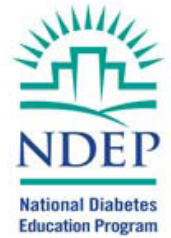


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Five Things Your Family Should Know About Your Diabetes

By the [National Diabetes Education Program](#)

If you have diabetes, you know that living with diabetes is not easy. Along with the usual everyday challenges life may bring, you also have to manage your diabetes 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It's common to feel overwhelmed, sad, or angry. Talking with your family about your diabetes and some of the struggles you face can help you deal with the stress, emotions, and other challenges in your life. Support from loved ones can make living with diabetes easier. Your loved ones may not be aware of things they can do to best support you.

The National Diabetes Education Program offers the following five things you can discuss with your family so they can provide support:

1. **Diabetes is serious.** Encourage your family to learn about diabetes. Make sure they know that the damage diabetes can cause to your heart, blood vessels, eyes, kidneys, and nerves can be prevented or delayed if you manage your disease. The more they know about the disease, the better they can help you meet the challenges you face. To help you and your loved ones learn more about living with diabetes together, you can take a class, read about diabetes online at www.YourDiabetesInfo.org, and talk with your health care team.
2. **Managing your diabetes means making a few lifestyle changes.** To live well, you need to be physically active as much as possible; make healthy food choices; and keep your blood glucose (sugar), cholesterol, and blood pressure under control. Take your medications as prescribed by your doctor even when you feel well. Sometimes it can be easier to make changes if you involve your family. Here are some tips on how to make lifestyle changes that are good for everyone in your family:
 - Eat healthy foods like fruits, vegetables, small servings of lean meats and poultry, dried peas or beans, and low-fat or skim milk and cheese. Select high fiber foods, such as whole grain breads and cereals.
 - Be active for at least 30 to 60 minutes on most days of the week. Physical activity, such as playing basketball, tag, or walking can be fun if you involve your loved ones.
3. **Your loved ones can help you make a plan and reach your goals.** Work with your loved ones to make a plan to help you reach your goals and manage your diabetes and its complications. Your loved ones can provide support along the way—and celebrate your hard work! Here are some tips to help you get started on making a plan that works for you:
 - Think about what is important to your health. What are you willing and able to do?
 - Decide what your goals are. What changes do you want to make? Choose one goal to work on first.

- What can your loved ones do to help you reach your goals?
4. **Routine care is important to help you manage your disease and stay healthy.** See your health care team and get your A1C test at least twice a year. The A1C test shows what your blood glucose has been over the last three months. Every year, make sure to have a dilated eye exam, comprehensive foot exam, dental exam, urine and blood test for kidney problems, a blood test for cholesterol, and your flu shot.
 5. **There are resources to help you and your family learn about living well with diabetes.** Visit the National Diabetes Education Program website at www.YourDiabetesInfo.org or call 1-888-693-NDEP (1-888-693-6337), TTY: 1-866-569-1162. Ask for your free copy of NDEP's [4 Steps to Control Your Diabetes. For Life.](#) brochure or [Help a Loved One with Diabetes](#) tip sheet. In addition, visit the "Make a Plan" page on NDEP's Diabetes HealthSense resource, an online library of more than 140 resources from more than 70 organizations that supports people—with or without diabetes—in making changes to live well. To learn more, visit www.YourDiabetesInfo.org/HealthSense.

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